

**LEADERSHIP AND EGO STATES; PRODIGY OR PATHOLOGY?  
A CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE.  
David P Best, BSc (Hons) MSc; PhD; FRSA; FMIoM.**

## **Acknowledgements**

**I am happy to acknowledge the help and support of my wife, Barbara in the development of this paper. Her ideas and challenges are, as always, provocative and constructive, and the emotional support that she gives me is irreplaceable.**

**Secondly, I appreciate the assistance I have received from Professor John Bessant, Professor of Innovation at Imperial College, London, in reviewing the academic literature on Leadership, and from Richard Wallstein of Field-Work for additional valuable review comments.**

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*How delicate was the touch of ancient rulers. When everything prospered under their administration, the people believed they had done everything themselves, of their own free will. (Wieger)*

*But when they accomplish their task and complete their work, the people say, "We did it ourselves." (Byrn) (both quotes from Lao Tsu; Tao Teh Ching Ch17 s3)*

**1. ABSTRACT**

*This paper aims to provide some initial thinking into the expression of ego states in those considered "leaders" in both European and in non- European organisations.*

*The paper is based on 30 years of consulting experience, and the examples given are therefore by way of case studies rather than on a statistically or methodologically based longitudinal sample. The conclusions should therefore be seen in this light.*

*The paper concludes with the hypothesis that in many cases leaders express behaviours and habits which indicate "non mature" or "non integrated" ego functions, for example the persecutory parent or the "indulged and demanding child".*

*It further proposes that success in organisational leadership bears little relationship to consistent or integrated ego functioning. To this extent it may be argued that many successful leaders do exhibit disease in their leadership roles and that the organisational cultures that result are a complement to the expression of the leader's personality. This maybe explained in terms of rackets, or in terms of other systemic theories and may account for the undue influence wielded by leaders who, from an external perspective are clearly anti social.*

**2. INTRODUCTION**

First of all, I would like to say how delighted and honoured I am to be invited to speak to you on this topic at the end of such a successful and fascinating conference. Secondly, I would like make it clear that I am not speaking to you as a qualified TA therapist or practitioner.

I am first and foremost a consultant to organisations and have spent most of my career since 1978 working with organisational leadership in dealing with the effect of implementing large scale information systems. I have been fortunate to work in some of the UK's leading companies and to have had, through my time in Deloitte Consulting, exposure to many international organisations in the public, private and non- governmental sectors.

Over the last fifteen years I have also trained in and practised coaching and psychotherapy, initially training in Gestalt therapy at the Sherwood Institute in Nottingham UK and over the last 12 or so years having the experience of working and learning in workshops with Richard Erskine, both in TA and the integrative approach developed by Richard Erskine, Rebecca Trautman and Jan Moursund. I am very grateful to my teachers, trainers and therapists for the insights I have gained over the years; it is clear however that my mistakes are my own.

Before I begin, however, a few remarks on the title of this address.

It is rather a tabloid headline, and by it I do not mean to imply that all or even a majority of leaders, at whatever level, are pathological. However when one sees the behaviours and apparently unstoppable leadership behaviour of people like Robert Maxwell, or the Enron Chairman Kenneth Lay, Nick Leason in Barings Bank, or in the political arena, and very close to here, Robert Mugabe, or in the immediate past Milosevic or Saddam, one cannot help but wonder what systems operate to keep them in power and their followers loyal. It is this and numerous examples in business at a more humble level that have prompted my interest in this topic. In posing the question “Pathology or Prodigy?”, therefore, I do not mean to pathologise leadership as such, but rather to stimulate a discussion on what constitutes healthy functioning at leadership level.

So it is against that background that I will make my remarks, but in presenting today I would set a context for the cases presented here by drawing some distinctions between the typical psychotherapeutic contract and the consulting one.

The psychotherapeutic contract is between the individual (or the family, couple etc) and the therapist; and the client as individual is the therapist’s principal, if not sole concern. This indeed is one of the most important frames for the success of the therapy (or not!), since it provides one important aspect of the safe, consistent, reliable and present, individually focussed, attention on the client and his or her presenting issues. Unless there is some danger, risk or illegal behaviour affecting others, the therapist is under no obligation to consider or to involve any outside or related individuals or structures, although of course most of us would take good and effective account of the environment in any therapeutic programme.

The consultant on the other hand is never in this situation. If one takes the view of consultant as change agent, or as observer and actor in the organisational systems that one is involved in, then the contract becomes a complex one.

In this case, the duty of care is to at least six interlocking and complex subsystems or communities.

These are:

- the client him or herself<sup>1</sup> (that is the person responsible for the engagement and who signs the invoices, and/ or one’s immediate contact);
- the function for which he is responsible and which is usually the principal target of the interventions;
- The structure within which he resides (division, subsidiary etc.);
- his colleagues affected by or affecting the course of the interventions;
- the wider organisational environment;
- And, ultimately, the shareholders, owners, or the regulator or equivalent body, and through them the community at large.

As a consultant one’s duty of care is to the organisation and its “owners” not only to the person signing off the invoice. This leads to interesting situations and is of course radically different from the therapeutic setting. This limits and to a certain extent may even govern the interventions that one can or cannot make. It is also the case that it

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that I will from this point onwards use “him” to refer to male or female. I imply no male bias by this convention.

means that one does not have access to the deeply personal material that is frequent in a therapy setting, and that even if one does it is privileged information that cannot and indeed, in most cases, must not be used in achieving the explicit outcome of the consulting engagement.

My remarks are therefore to be seen in this context.

In the body of the paper, I will first talk about leadership in general before recounting some small vignettes of leaders in their context and their behaviour, and then try to assess what, from the perspective of a TA and psychotherapeutic world view, is happening, and how their ego states express in these various scenes.

I will then speculate on what this means for the idea of leadership, and finally try to propose some hypotheses, or perhaps more prosaically, ideas, for further thought and observation.

### **3. LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is one of the most studied areas of social activity and certainly the most studied of organisational aspects of behaviour. According to Bligh and Meindl (Chap 2, Messick and Kramer 2005) there are no fewer than 6300 books listed on Amazon.com and no fewer than 1200 citations in the Expanded Academic Index for the year 2000 alone currently in print on the subject. This fascination with leadership is revealing in itself. I think it is revealing in the hopes and fears that it indicates we have with regard to our leaders, and the investment we make in their powers and capabilities. It also alludes, I think, to the extent to which we project our hopes and fears into the role, rather than owning them ourselves.

Finally, many of the individuals who form the subject of the writing about leaders are in fact more personalities than leaders, if by leader we mean the image of the “great man/woman” theory of leadership prevalent in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

If by leader we mean someone with a recognisable set of skills and capabilities accustomed to taking that role in our societies and organisations then the issue becomes more complex, as illustrated recently by Fred Luthans (2005) in his book *Organisational Behaviour*, who wrote that “leadership does remain pretty much a black box or unexplainable concept”. What constitutes a “leader” and how one distinguishes himself from the led has, and continues to be an area of fascinating, almost, one would say obsessive, study.

What constitutes a “leader” and how they distinguish themselves from the led has, and continues to be an area of fascinating, almost, one would say obsessive, study. The question that has often posed itself to me and which prompted the phrase “Pathology or prodigy” in my title was suggested to me by these years of observation.

The uncertainty that has often arisen from my observations, prompting the phrase “Pathology or prodigy” in my title, is that I am not sure whether a person who is, from the perspective of a psychotherapeutic world view, *integrated* would want to be, or would appoint themselves to be, a leader, although clearly some leaders are integrated.

The question that has fascinated me therefore is “is leadership a quality or a disease?” What is it that provokes particular characters to accept the projective

identification to become a leader in one case, and yet in other people, at other times, enables them to refuse it and remain themselves whilst fulfilling the role in particular well defined contexts? In other cases, of course a person aspires to leadership, whether others are keen on the idea or not.

Perhaps one could paraphrase Shakespeare<sup>2</sup> and say:

“some are born with an innate capacity for leadership, some grow, integrating the capacity to lead along the way, and others accept the transference that others wish them to be leaders”

Clearly there are great leaders recognised by universal acclaim either at the time or in retrospect, and Churchill and Mandela would I suppose count among them, as would Gorbachev and Thatcher. In business one thinks of Jack Welch, Richard Branson or Bill Gates. In the religious or spiritual realm, one thinks of Gandhi (though he was also political), and Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama, and here in South Africa Desmond Tutu.

However these individuals vary enormously in their background, their context, their goals, beliefs and world views. Scarcely anything in fact holds them in common except for the label of “great leader”. Equally some leaders as I alluded to in my introductory remarks are clearly, if not mentally disturbed, on the edge of it. One thinks of, in Europe Stalin, Milosevic, and in Africa, Amin, Mugabe and elsewhere in the world others.

By these labels I do not mean those whose views it is simply convenient to label as “mad or bad” because they do not coincide with our own, but who pursue goals or mental habits which clearly indicate a malaise or dysfunction to their detriment and that of their people.

My dealings have in general been with those far below this level, I have mainly dealt with the leaders or heads of large corporate or public bodies whether companies such as BP, Deloitte and Touche, Shell, Marks and Spencer, Electricité de France (EDF), GPU Power (Texas) government departments (UK Cabinet Office, and UK treasury; Cyprus Department of Transportation, Hungarian National Bibliotec,), or non-governmental organisations such as national museums, libraries, and charities (MacMillan Cancer Relief, the British Red Cross, The International Labour Organisation, The Arab Conference on Vocational Education Slovenia University of Ljubliana ).

These people are typically leading organisations of between 20,000 and 200,000 employees and their activities may touch the lives of millions of customers. They are leaders but not in the Great Man/Woman type; they have been charismatic, effective, tyrannical, inadequate, sometimes all at the same time; they are in short like the rest of us but occupy this position of leader.

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<sup>2</sup> “Be not afraid of greatness Malvolio: "Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em." Twelfth Night (II, v, 156-159)” (courtesy e-notes)

Although time does not permit a detailed exposition of leadership theories here, the table below summarises the current state of thinking on leadership (modified after Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison, 2003)

**TABLE 1. Schools of Thought in Leadership Theory**

School of thought	Brief characteristics	Writers/ sub theories
<b>Great Man Theories</b>	Leaders are exceptional people, with specific characteristics that enable them to lead. Only “men” since leadership was thought to be a predominantly if not exclusively male characteristic.	Now widely disregarded
Trait Theories	Lists of traits or qualities or attributes of leaders, which continue to be produced	Stogdill, 1974.
Behavioural theories	Focusing on what leaders do rather than the characteristics they display; highly developed in many practical management. Also key in the development of Competency frameworks and performance management frameworks	<b>McGregor 1960</b> , theory X and Y; X autocratic and directive; Y consultative person centred <b>Blake and Mouton’s</b> Managerial Grid; Concern for people vs. Concern for production
Situational Leadership	Sees leadership style emerging as a quality from specific situations and leadership as dependant on those situations. Tries to identify or predict the leadership style to fit different situations.	<b>Hersey-Blanchard</b> model of leadership; Directive vs. supportive behaviour <b>Tannenbaum and Schmidt</b> Leadership continuum <b>Adair</b> , Action Centred Leadership Mode; Task, Individual, and Team.
Contingency Theory	A refinement of the situational theory and attempts to focus the situational variable that will predict the leader’s behaviour or style.	<b>Fiedler’s</b> Contingency model. Leader Member relations; Task structure; Position Power. Leaders and followers <b>Greenleaf</b> , “Servant leaders” <b>Katzenbach and Smith</b> “The following part of Leading” Team Leadership <b>Meredith Belbin</b> . Team roles: Shaper, Plant Completer finisher etc. Solo vs. Team leadership.
Transactional Theory	Emphasises the relationship between leaders and followers, though not from a psychological perspective;	<b>James McGregor Burns</b> Transforming leadership, first mention of “moral agent”. <b>Bass</b> developed this to

	focuses on the explicit or implicit contract between leader and followers w.r.t. recognition and reward etc.	Social change though only one way.. Transactional leadership is based on output and results
Transformational Leadership	The focus is change and the role of the leader in enabling or promoting the changes required by the organisation.	<b>Covey</b> , is based in values and purposes, ethics and long term goals, missions and strategies.

Additionally, in a scholarly analysis of the characteristics of the books on leadership Bligh and Meindl (op. cit) provide the following clusters of titles and subject and the accompanying primary characteristics of writing on leadership in their article entitled *The Cultural Ecology of Leadership*:

**TABLE 2 (After Bligh and Meindl)**  
Map of Node Clusters, Primary Characteristics, and Book Title Samples

<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Primary Characteristics</i>	<i>Sample Book Title</i>
<i>Cluster 1</i> Leading Change	Organizational change, Collection /Edited Volume, Expert Voice	<i>Organization 2000: The Essential Guide for Companies in the New Economy</i>
<i>Cluster 2</i> Leading scientifically	Academic author Trait/competency approach Business setting	<i>Radical Innovation: How Mature Companies Can Outsmart Upstarts</i>
<i>Cluster 3</i> Learning from leadership in context	<i>Sub-cluster characteristics</i> Political Setting	<i>Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton.</i>
<i>Cluster Characteristics</i> Biography Autobiography	Historical setting Educational setting Military setting Sports setting	<i>The Prince</i>  <i>Fundamental Concepts of Educational Leadership and Management</i> <i>Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun</i> <i>Everyone s a Coach: Five Business Secrets for High- Performance Coaching</i>
<i>Cluster 4</i> Leading through imagination	Fictional story Fictional characters ‘Evangelical voice’	<i>The Servant: A Simple Story About the True Essence of Leadership</i>
<i>Cluster 5</i> Insider accounts	Business author Autobiography Expert Voice	<i>Get Better or Get Beaten: 31 Leadership Secrets from GE’s Jack Welch</i>
<i>Cluster 6</i> Consultants on leadership	Consultant author Business setting Numbered suggestions	<i>The Leader of the Future; New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era</i>



<i>Cluster 7</i>	Religious leader	<i>Spiritual Leadership Principles</i>
Leading through	“Evangelical voice”	<i>of Excellence</i>
religion	Religious setting	<i>for Every Believer</i>

Each cluster represents a number of titles of books which have the main characteristics described in the central column, and examples of which are in the right hand column.

This illustrates the enormous variety of approaches to the subject, and those interested are recommended to look at the literature in order to assess the range of thought and analysis that has been brought to bear on the field.

In general however the most important points seem to be:

- Leadership, although it includes the ability to plan, to organise tasks and activities, and to administer people, is more than this;
- Leaders are not distinguished by any discernible traits (physical, cultural or educational);
- Leaders may emerge in situations which others would not expect of them;
- Leadership includes some ability to paint a compelling vision that their followers will not only accept but embrace;
- Leadership appears to include the ability to contain or structure the field in a way that followers find securing;
- Leadership may include, indeed place emphasis on, moral values and other non- material outcomes, these values however may be counter to the prevailing ethic;
- Leadership may be output focused or long term mission focused and will be heavily influenced by situation and contingent variables.
- Leaders have the quality of charisma (albeit to varying degrees) and this appears to include values, faith and conviction (although these qualities may be bad or good); there is no particular positive moral valuation necessarily attached to the notion of leadership.

The key “missing” it seems to me is any real treatment of the relationship between leader and follower and how this operates in terms of the personality structure of both. This is true, even where, as in Kets de Vries (*Leaders, Fools and Imposters*, 2003), the main subject is on the psychology of leadership, in this case from a Psychodynamic perspective.

The only specific paper that I have found dealing with this aspect is in “*the Psychology of Leadership*” (vid. sup.) where the issue of the interactions between leaders and followers is addressed, but even here it is addressed in terms of the transactions of benefit and cost rather than being about interpersonal or relational issues.

It is however a good start to the conversation. It covers the provision of various social goods to followers from leaders and vice versa, covering elements such as:

- Vision and Direction
- Protection and Security
- Achievement and Effectiveness
- Inclusion and belongingness

- Pride and Self respect
- Focus and Self Direction
- Gratitude and Loyalty
- Commitment and Effort
- Respect and obedience.

Much of this is built on or taken from very early work on needs, for example that of Maslow or Herzberg's hierarchies. There is a tempting similarity however, in these ideas with the concepts of relational needs developed by a number of authors (Bowlby and Stern in the child developmental field and Bach, Basch, Kohut, and Erskine Moursund and Trautmann, and others, in the Psychology and psychotherapy.)

The relationship between leader and follower(s) is obviously key; and yet this has had relatively little attention in the literature that I have been able to review in preparing this address. The field of leadership seems cut off from that of Interpersonal or Group relations for example, although, in Berne's early theory of organisations, group work and group process both had an important place (see below).

What is significant to me is that it is recognised that followers are not only essential to the role of a leader (pretty obviously) but the role of the follower has a critical effect on the behaviour and success or otherwise of the leaders. Imagine for example if George Washington's followers had decided at the last moment that they preferred to remain a colony of Great Britain!!

Turning now to Berne's theory of organisations, as represented below after Fox (1975).

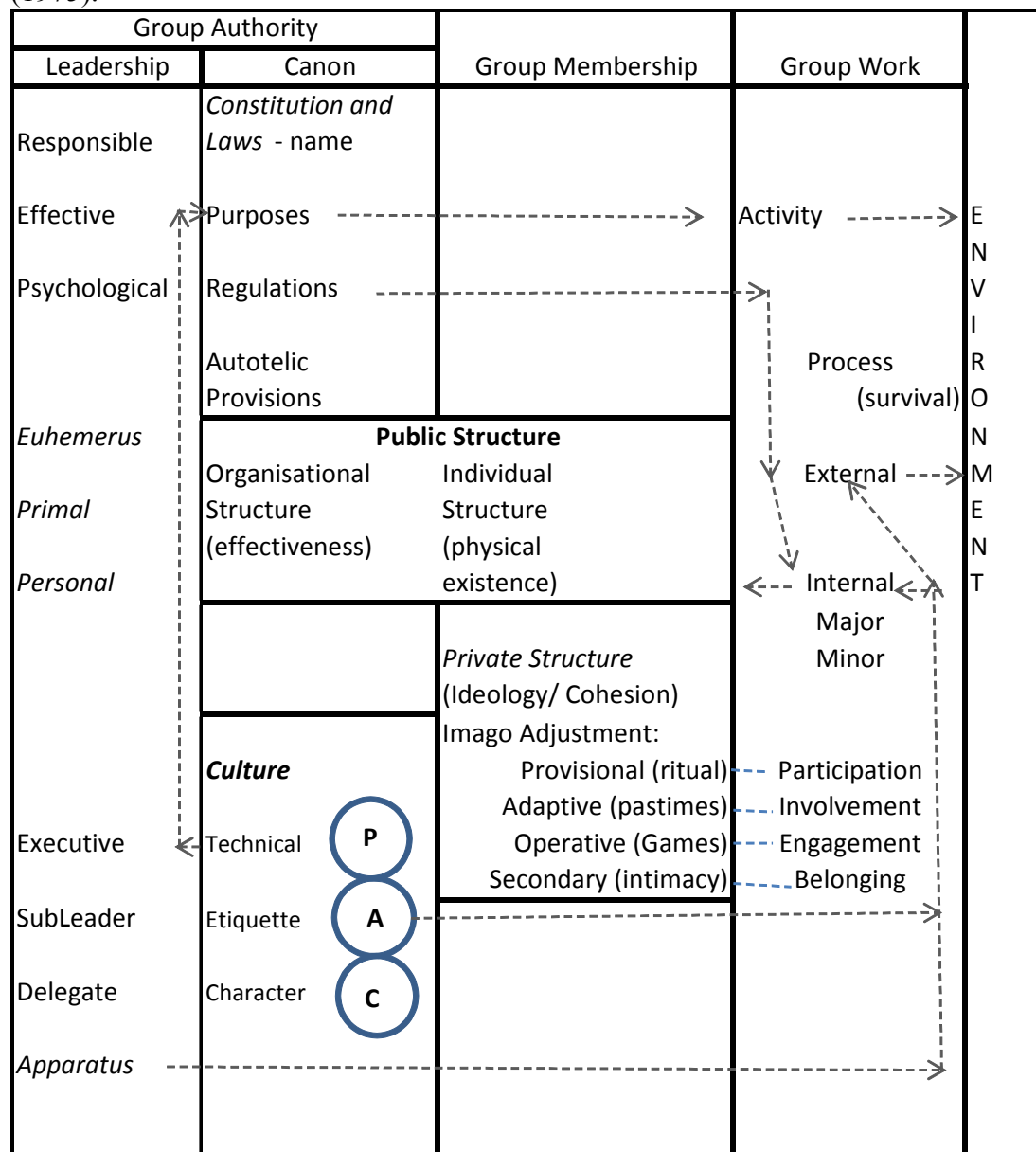


Fig 1. Berne's Organisational Model, Taken from Eliot M Fox TAJ 5:4 1975

Berne's work depicted above in the table shows some very interesting elements in the light of my analysis below.

In the origination of the concepts of Euhemeri (Ghandi), Primal Leaders (Mandela) and Personal Leaders (Buthulezi perhaps?), and in his concepts of the Group apparatus, and the clear separation between structure and process his work foreshadowed some of the later and newer thinking of, among others the neo-cyberneticians, whose work on organisations as quasi-organic systems (self regulating complex systems) has shaped a great deal of modern systems thinking. These concepts however do not in themselves address the issues of the interpersonal relationships between the leader and the follower group, or the peculiar situation of the bad leader kept in power beyond his sell by date, even when universally loathed by a significant part of the follower group. I believe that they do go some way

towards addressing the question of how it is that leaders remain in power or in position long after their real value has passed, and I have ventured some remarks about this further on in the paper.

For my proposition this is a critical aspect; in systemic terms it does not make sense to consider leader without follower.

My first conclusion in a way is that the field might usefully be renamed to that of the study of leaders in context, or of Leadership and Followership. It is odd and an interesting reflection on the cult of individualism that is current in the so-called Western nations that this needs to be pointed out.

In describing the approach that I have taken therefore I have been at pains to look at the relational aspects of leadership behaviour, and about how leaders and followers mutually emerge and meet the relational needs of each other –even if in dysfunctional or ultimately destructive ways. Although I have been influenced in what I say by Berne's work on organisations the more recent influences are those of organismic systems analysis, neo cybernetics and the work in particular of the School of Maturana and Varela, and later Espejo, Garcia and the Aston School, of which I was a member.

This work has provided me with an analytical perspective which sees organisations as complex self regulating systems, open to the environment with regard to energy (money, goods raw materials and intellectual property) but closed with regards to values, behaviour, and group mores, and in which the leader is both representative of and forms, the culture that defines the organisation and the relationships within it. In this paper therefore I want to focus on how the expression of ego states functions within the leader/follower relationship and how ego states “work” in the culture of the enterprise.

The most useful concepts in this exercise have proven to be those of Games and Rackets, especially the work that has been done on interlocking racket systems (Hotly 1979), and underlying this an inquiry into how relational needs might be met by the operation of these mechanisms.

Whilst I have reviewed the areas of research outside psychotherapy referred to above, and take them into account in this address, I will make no further mention of them, I have provided a few references for those who wish to follow up.

#### **4. MY APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT.**

My approach will be to present three case studies and to attempt some diagnosis of the leadership style and personal qualities of each in the context of their role and the teams and groups of people (employees, partners and colleagues) who they lead, concluding with observations of “health” or “dis-ease”.

The goal is to assess in each case what is happening in the interpersonal group process; would we find them to be functioning healthily in a social and personal context or would we find some dysfunctional aspects? And how severe is the dysfunction?

In taking this approach I have assessed the individuals (or rather my recollection and perception of them) from the TA perspective, from the point of view of a conventional Gestalt perspective (interruptions to contact, and systemic aspects) and finally from the perspective of an integrated relational psychotherapy (Erskine, Moursund and Trautmann) and within the systems and cybernetic framework referred to above.

I have asked a number of questions:

- What is happening at the process level in the interactions and transactions that I have observed?
- What ego states are active in the transactions I observe?
- Are there any repeating or fixed patterns evident in these transactions, which might indicate stuck-ness or incongruence in the personality?
- What does this imply in terms of ego states, script and/or rackets?
- What was the impact on the organisation of these behaviours and attitudes?

From a TA perspective I have not carried out the strict analysis of Ego states, transactions games and scripts (Berne 1961, p11), I have however used these concepts, and have also used the concepts of Rackets (Erskine and Zalcman 1979, Holtby 1979 and as extended by various authors, notably Stewart and Joins (1987) in analysing the case studies.

#### **4. THE LEADERS**

In this section I describe the context and behaviour of three leaders by relating vignettes of their behaviours and impacts on their subordinates. First though I want to comment on the cross cultural aspects of leadership in organisations.

I have been fortunate to have worked with clients in North and South America, Europe and Africa, though not in Asia and have always been fascinated by the extent of the similarity of behaviours when once cultural differences are taken into account.

Little has been written about the cross cultural aspects of leadership after the work on traits in the early part of the last century. Clearly, however, there are cultural differences, but these are less obvious than might be thought, at least from my experience.

Social context and the structures differ significantly, for example from, say, Cyprus and Switzerland; in Cyprus the loyalties and operation of organisations are often partly affected by family ties, and what might be called nepotism in the UK is regarded as proper attention to the needs of family in the Greek culture. It is not at all

remarkable for example to find a family member preferred for a job or for promotion over an outsider. It would be considered quite unacceptable to prefer an outsider to a family member, and would give rise to tremendous trouble.

In Switzerland on the other hand, the relationships between boss and employee or leader and follower are frequently determined by their relative ranks in the reserve forces than their ostensible roles in the employment context.

Both these settings can produce unexpected results for the consultant and can give the impression of cultural diversity and culturally determined behaviours which is not the case when the local context is taken into account. The *behaviour* of the leaders in these cases however differs much less than the *contexts* in which the behaviours apply. Hence, the behaviours which one might attribute to cultural difference are seen as closely similar to leadership behaviours in other cultures, once one takes the time and trouble to understand the cultural context.

This is supported by research that found little variation in leadership behaviour between cultures. It can be tempting however to mistake cultural contextual differences for radically different leadership behaviours.

Having said this, in Chile and in Brazil, the culture of organisations is very different and this leads to a different reaction to the behaviour of the leader, and different expectations of the outcome.

In Chile especially the hierarchy is very rigid in the organizations that I have experience of; and the obedience to the requests of the leader stricter than in Brazil or elsewhere. For example in a recent engagement I took the team to dinner, not an unusual occurrence when a multi national group is assembled. The Chilean members were absent.

When I inquired next morning why, it became apparent that their (Brazilian) boss had suggested that over the course of the week, to reduce costs, they might dine in the hotel once or twice, rather than go out to a restaurant. This suggestion (which was what it was, not an order or instruction) had been interpreted literally by the Chileans to mean they should always eat in the hotel irrespective that it was me paying!! When I pointed this out, it was made clear that my invitation did not overrule “a direct order from my boss”. This form of straight line and literal thinking may result from a period of twenty five years of particularly strict dictatorship, where any deviation was discouraged or even dangerous. In TA terms the prevalence of Controlling parent in the management culture may be seen as strong.

If I assess the leadership behaviour that led to this result, it is more or less the same that it would be in America or the UK; and indeed in America, certainly on the East coast, suggestions to subordinates can be interpreted every bit as strictly as in Chile! But the injunctions originate in different cultural beliefs, for example the protestant work ethic produces behaviours indistinguishable to the direct order culture in Chile, but the source of the injunction is different. And maybe conditioned by recent events as in Chile or in social norms (as on the East Coast).

In Greece in contrast requests are treated with respect but in good time –and consultation is the rule. The behaviours of leaders however are similar in all these cases, but the pace of acquiescence varies.

We may say from the systems perspective, that whilst the characteristics of the environment are different, sometime radically so, the characteristics of leaders and followers are invariant, though some of the characteristics that define these behaviours will be stressed more in some environments than in others. I am tempted to say that leadership behaviour differs more between organisations than between countries, as the following vignettes might suggest.

#### **4.1 The Chairman. (The toddler in the Toyshop?) Aspired to greatness....**

The Chairman had been previously the head of one of the UK's leading technological universities and had been loved and feared by his staff there in equal measure. He had led it from its inception for about twenty years to a hugely successful outcome. He was also the Chairman of a small group of engineering companies. I worked closely with him over a four year period. He had a complex personality and was able to inspire, intimidate and irritate most of his senior colleagues, sometimes all in one day! The following episodes are typical.

##### **4.1.1 The research committee.**

This group which met monthly had as its terms of reference to generate and develop ideas for possible new products. It was composed of the Manufacturing Director, The Sales and Marketing Director, the Chief Engineer, the head of R&D, the CEO of the international trading company, the Chairman and myself, as head of Consulting. Typically the chairman would have spent some time over weekends developing one or more new ideas often based in his own research and often would bring a prototype made from odd components secured from the local car breakers' yards, hardware stores and other sources.

He would always show these with pride and delight and challenge the factory and R&D to produce something as cheap and effective in as little time, and with good design.

These meetings were fraught; the chairman with his "toys" as his colleagues described them behind his back, and the Directors of the manufacturing, R&D and Engineering functions trying to engage with him whilst pointing out the often serious problems in bringing these things to market. The Chairman meantime would point out the "ridiculously" slow development times taken, the "absurdly" high overhead cost, and the "obscene" margins, that were being added to his "simple and effective design ideas"

His only ally in these meetings was the Sales and Marketing Director, who would be often excited and stimulated by the commercial prospects for the ideas that were on display and shared the Chairman's enthusiasm.

Often the meetings (which were two hours long) would break up inconclusively or with some bad feeling. Outside the meetings there would be general despair at what was seen as his "Academic", other-worldly" or "childish" ideas, whilst simultaneously praising the "brilliant, lateral thinking, amazingly creative" ideas that he always produced. The main characteristic for me was a sense of confusion, a feeling that what was going on was actually not what was going on – in short a sense that you will recognise that the transactions were script bound or "gamey"

Needless to say perhaps, these meetings whilst providing tremendous entertainment value, did little to enhance organisational effectiveness; especially since no one was

prepared to openly challenge him or to provide a framework or structure in which he could be contained or guided (he was Chairman of this group as well as majority owner of the businesses). I was new to the company and the Committee and was the most junior in age of all those present by some 15 years – my tendency in these meetings was to observe and keep quiet.

#### **4.1.2 The Board**

The Executive Board of the Company (different from the Statutory Board) of which at this time I was secretary, was a significant decision making body. It consisted of the subsidiary CEOs (four people) the HR director (the Chairman's wife), the Group Finance Director, the Group Commercial Director and the Head of Engineering and of Manufacturing.

The agenda was structured and heavy and the meetings lasted from 10am to 4pm, with a sandwich lunch.

The Chairman was normally urbane and cheerful in these meetings and moved the business along smoothly and effectively, a marked contrast from the previous example; however there were limits. This is best exemplified by a situation where the CFO had presented a situation of fairly serious financial difficulty. The position would necessitate cut back or reductions on the budgets for departments for the remainder of the year.

The Chairman dealt skilfully with these demands and mediated the differences between the current and required situations securing, in general, agreement to the actions required without undue conflict; however, when the R&D and research budgets were considered he became emotional, irrational, and unreasonable. In an English phrase he “threw his toys out of the cot”.

In fact throughout this discussion he became aggressive, unthinking, and profoundly emotional and eventually the debate passed on without resolution of this area.

It is not often that one is privileged to have much knowledge or information of the family background of those with whom one works, but in this case I know that he was brought up by his mother, his father having died when he was 8 years old.

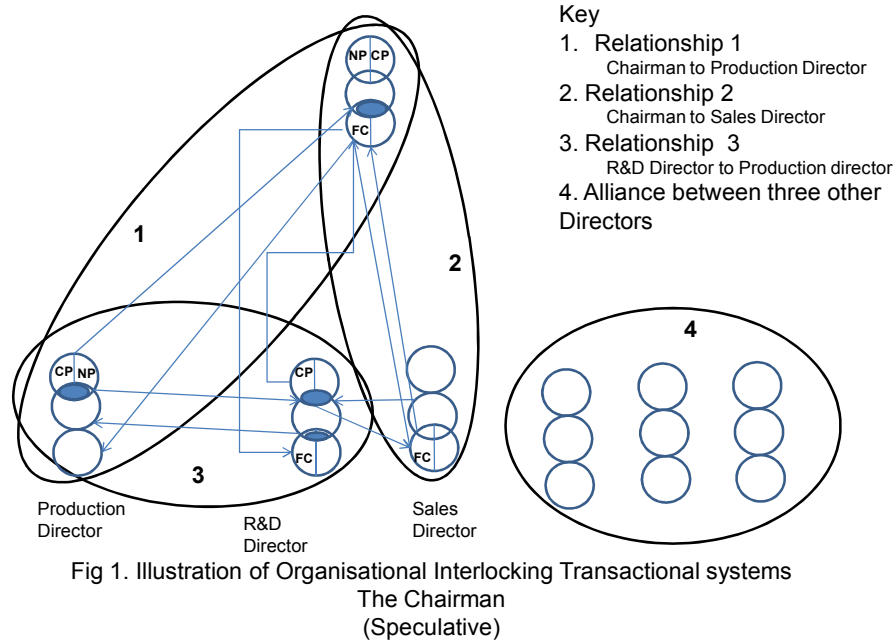
After that he won a scholarship to a leading UK university when he was 16, one of the youngest students on record at that time, took his Doctorate at the age of 21, and became a full Professor of engineering at one of the country's top universities at the age of 28, virtually unheard of, and during this period oversaw the building of a new faculty of Engineering funded by one of the Country's leading R&D organisations.

At the age of 36 he was research and development director of one of the UK's top aerospace and engineering companies. When 45 he became the head of the University.

Respected, admired, copied, and feared in equal measure he was in every respect an extraordinary man and inspired huge affection as well as trepidation in those who worked for him.



### 4.1.3 Analysis



The above diagram represents my attempt to represent what was happening in the Product Development meeting, and which I believe is born out by the behaviour of the Chairman in the Board meeting.

I have chosen four relational subsystems to illustrate my inference as to the state of affairs.

1. The relationship between Production Director and Chairman.
2. Relationship between Sales Director and Chairman
3. Relationship between R&D Director and Production Director

I believe that the Chairman related in general in this meeting as Free Child to either Free Child or Parent Ego states in his fellow directors.

#### 1. Production director to Chairman.

In the case of the Production Director his position is Free Child to Nurturing parent and is an appeal to “see what I’ve made Dad!”.

Unfortunately the result is that the Production Director, torn between disapproval and wish to please responds from either with Adaptive child or from Controlling Parent, and there is thus a comprehensive miss of communication.

This chain of transactions might be paraphrased as:

**Chairman:** “Look at what I’ve done Dad”

**Production Director:** “Its really nice Dad but I don’t want to play” or “put your toys away its time for work”

#### 2. Chairman to R&D Director

The transaction with the R&D director is equally crossed:

Here the chairman is relating from Free Child again to Free Child in R&D and runs something like

**Chairman:** “look what I’ve got, we can really have fun with this!!”.

But the response from the R&D director is from Critical Parent and runs something like:

**R&D Director:** “don’t be silly; isn’t it about time you acted your age?”  
his response is bolstered by his status as R&D head and therefore, equally qualified in the innovation areas by his status, he is able to confront the Chairman but instead of doing this from Adult, for example,

“that is very interesting Chairman but could you and I meet to discuss the pros and cons?”

he is put into Critical Parent perhaps by residual insecurity and the generally paternalistic Company culture, and responds as above.

### **3. Chairman and Sales Director**

Meanwhile the Sales Director who is an ally of the Chairman or normally his favourite son, is suddenly in the spotlight as the Chairman appeals to him again from Free Child:

**Chairman:** “look Peter, at what I’ve made; I bet all your friends would love to play with this!”

Thus appealed to, the Sales Director who has a highly active Adaptive Child (which he uses in Sales to good effect), responds:

**Sales Director:** “Wow! Chairman that’s great I would love to meet with you and really explore the possibilities”

Whilst this interaction is going on the Production and R&D directors, who have a good adult relationship (same age same background, wives get on etc.) have an aside that runs something like:

**One to the other:** For goodness sake, the big kid! Does he realise what he looks like, messing about with this amateur design? We have a business to run!” “I agree, How are we going to distract him from this sort of thing?”

The R&D director is in more or less permanent Critical Parent with the Sales Director who rarely impresses him with his enthusiasm or his performance and least of all with his apparently wide eyed endorsement of the Chairman’s ideas.

Whilst this is a one interpretation of the transactions in this meeting, there are clearly other sets of transactions operating that serve to keep all players in script; I have speculated that these are interlocking systems of rackets. The general case of a racket is given in the following diagram modified after Erskine and Zalcman and Stewart and Joins.



Fig 2. Basic Racket System  
(modified after Erskine and Zalcman, Stewart and Joines)

Although the crossed transactions described in the initial diagram are sufficient to explain the behaviours of that meeting, I do not believe that in themselves they are sufficient to account for the behaviour of the Chairman and his colleagues over long periods of time; for this I believe it is helpful to regard the system of interactions from the perspective of interlocking Racket systems. The diagram below illustrates one version of such a system between the Chairman and the Production Director. This is clearly not clinically rigorous since I have not had the opportunity to conduct the detailed personal work with any of the participants that would be necessary.

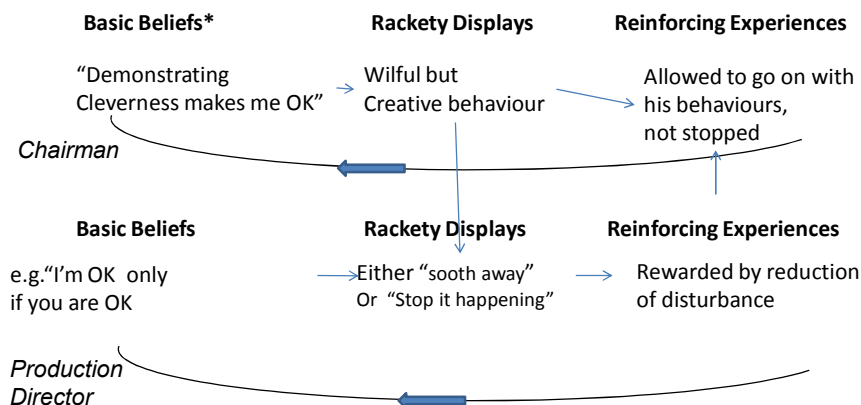


Fig 3. The Chairman & Production Director

**\*NB** although these are labelled Basic beliefs, it is unlikely that those given here are in fact "basic", given the purely inferential nature of this analysis.

Nor is it probably strictly accurate since the categories of "basic beliefs" in the diagram are inferred and not strictly formulated, but despite these limitations, I

believe that it is useful in helping to understand what is going on in the system to keep patterns of behaviours operating over periods of years without significant changes. In the diagram above I have illustrated a basic belief of the Chairman as being something like “Being clever and displaying this makes me OK” or “I’m OK if I’m clever”; it is likely that this is underlain by a more important survival belief formed well before the death of his father when he was eight years old; possibly the belief that I have identified is itself a cover for deeper and more difficult feelings originating in early childhood.

We may conjecture that the belief about being clever arose and was reinforced during the period of childhood in which he was responsible for the income of his lone mother, or at least was connected with this. This belief, coupled with an intense dislike of limits to his “creative” behaviour, is of course also typical of the all-powerful child of the period of two- ish + years.

This belief and the behaviour that goes with it are also typical of an oscillation between Free and Adapted Child, in both positive and negative aspects. He clearly discovered at some point that the display of cleverness resulted in approval and attention from those that he wanted this from; he has been successful all his life on working this racket and the reward and recognition that have been the results in adulthood have provided strong reinforcement for this racket to continue.

In the case of the Production Director his basic life position appears to be a variation of the “I’m OK if you’re OK” or “anything for a quiet life” type. His display is therefore to sooth away or to fix the behaviours (especially in this job he has, those of the Chairman) which prevent his quiet life. His rewards are evident in promotion and bonuses for going along with the Chairman’s madcap ideas; and in this case the two rackets complement each other strongly. I have represented the operation of this racket in figure 3 above.

In the second case illustrated below, that of the Sales Director in interaction with the Chairman, the Racket is more elusive; the Sales Director, a young man with a strong paternal relationship to the Chairman seems to have a belief (again I assume a cover for a primary belief that I do not know) that “if he is his father’s favourite he is safe”

The Chairman frequently “protects” him from criticism from other members of the team even though he appears to be perfectly capable of defending himself from comments, which in an adult sense are trivial but critical, sarcastic or ironic. The way to obtain this protection for him, is to support the strongest person present, normally the Chairman

This is not universally the case however, and there were occasions during which the Sales Director’s loyalty would suddenly and inexplicably switch to the R&D Director. I conjecture that this is because the R&D Director, as noted earlier, is the only rival in power to the Chairman in these meetings. This variation in the expression of the Adaptive Child again caused some perturbation in these meetings. The obvious complementarity allowed for both men to get their relational needs met, albeit in an out of awareness and in a marginally dysfunctional way.

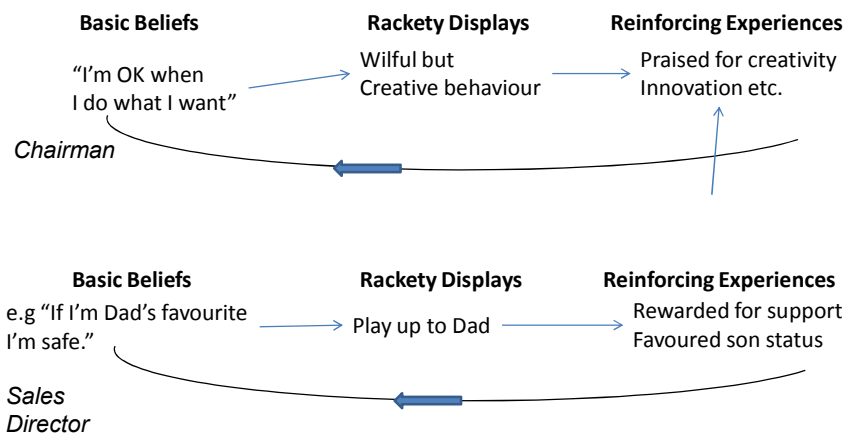


Fig 4: The Chairman & Sales Director

When these interactions are assessed in the light of my description of the Board Meeting, it is apparent that the creative adjustment of the Chairman is that he has confined the Free Child to the area of creative thinking and Research and Development; in the board except in this specific area, his behaviours were much more consistently adult, and the number of crossed transactions far less frequent. There was still the paternal projection from the Sales Director, and to a greater or lesser degree a display of Critical parent from both R&D and Production Directors, but the acute display was not apparent except on the subject of R&D.

#### 4. 2 The Newly Privatised Company and the Accidental (situational) Leader. (the Bully in the Playground?) Had it thrust upon him...

This is also a UK situation and relates to a CEO who had come to this position through the privatisation of the organisation. The net effect of this was that he was fairly wealthy in his own right through the shares that he had received, though he continued as CEO of the business. Initially I had little to do with him and worked mainly with his customer services Director, also a Main Board Director. My involvement started in order to carry out Quality reviews of a large (\$50m) project on which their future depended.

We had carried out two quality audits and had found significant weaknesses in both the structure of the project and its execution, and in fact felt that the project was badly conceived and unlikely to deliver its benefits without a major overhaul.

We pointed these issues out in discussion with the Director responsible and submitted our report. Three months later at the second review we again pointed out these failings and stressed forcibly the issues at stake and the areas which we felt had to be addressed. The sponsoring Director assured us that steps were being, and would be, taken, and that everything that needed to be done would be done.

### **4.2.1 The Interview**

Six months into our involvement, at the third review, I took the view that we could not allow this situation to continue and asked for an interview with the CEO, having addressed the issues once again with the director responsible.

The CEO was impatient from the beginning of the meeting and demanded to know why I did not deal instead with his colleague.

When I explained the position his reaction was to become angry and unreasonable accusing me of inventing issues for commercial gain and to get my foot in the door. When I persisted with my explanation he listened impatiently and said “young man (I was 42!) I do not run a blame culture in this company I just want you to tell me who to fire (dismiss)”. My response to the question put to me was to ask who had made the decision on the project originally. His answer was “the Board”. I suggested that he and the Board were to share the responsibility. This produced a raging response during which I was called a number of names.

### **4.2.2 The Audit Committee**

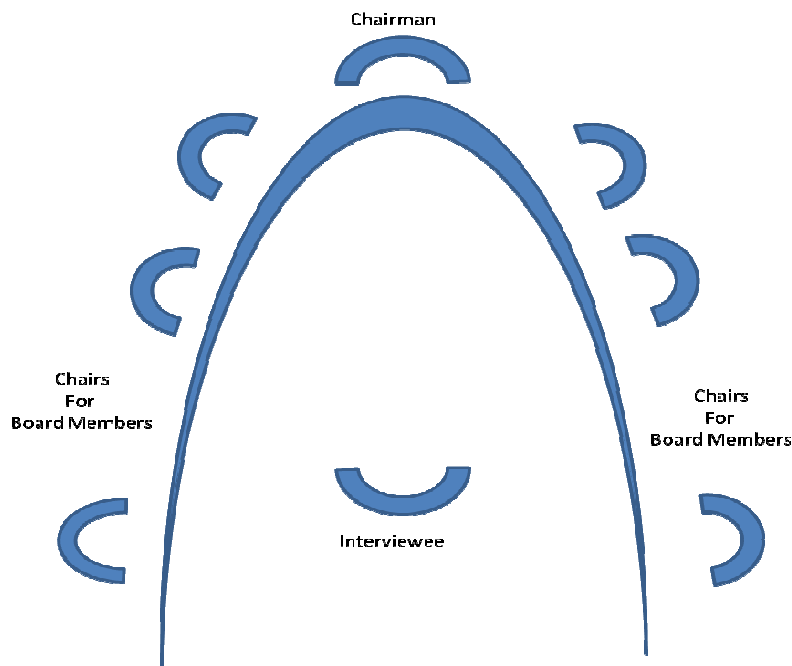
I was asked to attend an Audit committee to explain where we felt the money (£38m) had gone and why. The CEO attended this meeting but the Company Chairman was in the Chair. The CEO’s behaviour was in strong contrast to the behaviour that I had witnessed and been subjected to. He was subservient, quiet, and almost timid. He ventured only a few comments and those very quietly and spoke when spoken to. The meeting was in a normal meeting room with a rectangular layout.

When addressed at all he spoke quietly and stuttered, sitting low in his chair and almost trying to look invisible. He presented himself as the victim of the situation and tried to imply that he was a helpless victim of a devious and deceiving subordinate whose actions and projects he was somehow not responsible for. He wrung his hands and was generally inadequate in his response and in his proposals as to how to resolve the situation. It was left to me to propose the way forward (which he subsequently managed to derail – but see below)

### **4.2.3 The interview**

The CEO’s behaviour and demeanour in the Audit committee was in stark contrast to his behaviour when a few days later he interviewed the Director responsible for the problem project.

Perhaps at this point I should mention the weekly reporting session that this CEO had instituted on taking over. Each Monday each Director and senior manager was required to give an account for twenty minutes of their area of responsibility to a set format of performance reports and statistics, Key Performance Indicators etc. This is not unusual in itself but the setting in this company was. It is shown in the diagram below.



**The Company X Board Table**

Figure 5. The Hot Seat

The manager is in the centre of a crescent shaped table surrounded by his management and facing the chairman of the meeting (the CEO). In this intimidating setting he is questioned about his performance. Directors had to change seats for their own review, leaving their accustomed chair and taking the hot seat in the crescent. It was against this setting that people were expected to disclose problems or bad news for the business. This was what passed for team management and leadership in this particular company.

I was asked to attend this meeting to “find out what’s been going on”.

The Director was summoned to a meeting with his peers and was subjected to a tirade from the CEO, letting him know not only how he had let down the team (!) but also failed, failed and failed again. The Director made little defence except to say that our report had languished in his drawer without disclosure or any action in line with our proposals or indeed any others. That he thought “things would improve because the Project Manager had promised him they would”. It seemed to me that he was simply too intimidated by his boss to disclose problems or bad news and that indeed his only way of being safe was to make things apparently alright for the boss.

This quasi-magical thinking eventually (of course) was unsustainable.

By that afternoon the Director responsible for the project had left his office and his job, and his responsibilities had been reallocated; as far as the CEO was concerned the problem was fixed.

We had made a number of proposals as to how the project could be cut back and restructured and made more modest in order to deliver at least something of value to the Company. Whilst the Audit committee were promised that the situation would improve the CEO prevaricated, alternately blaming and demanding rescue and eventually I communicated that my Firm could no longer be associated with this situation, and resigned the account formally. The Audit Committee were informed as were the Company’s Bankers and shareholders.

Ten months later the business was sold to a competitor and the Board was no more.

#### 4.2.4 Analysis

On the face of it the situation here is quite straightforward. Although there were many more complications I think that the Project Manager, the Director responsible and the CEO were stuck firmly in the Drama Triangle (Karpman), shown below.

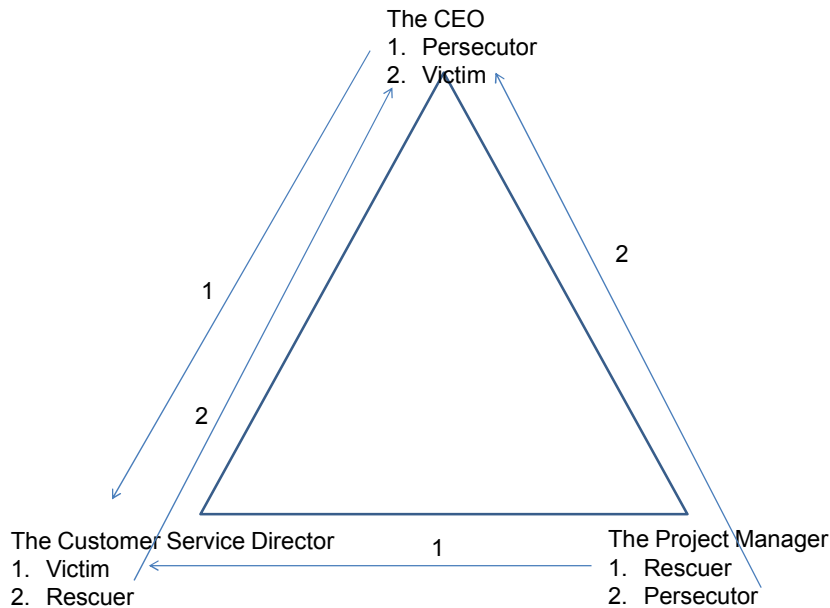


Fig. 6. the Drama Triangle and the Unintended Leader

One can see the persecutor in the meeting that I held with the CEO; when under stress from below the “bullying” behaviour kicks in, whilst, when subject to stress from above, there is an immediate tendency to play Victim. Between the Project Manager and the Director responsible on the other hand it is also clear the triangle works between them with the Project Manager (also fired by the CEO) rescuing (though not very effectively) the Director. In the interview it is tempting to see the Director hunched in his chair as almost acting as rescuer of the CEO whilst the Project Manager (whose position throughout was one of supercilious detachment) was almost persecuting the CEO for his failings.

Whilst this is fairly obvious in the episode that I have described here in the project situation, the interview situation with the curved table and the twenty minute interview each week speaks of an institutionalisation of the persecutory culture and seems more complex both in terms of transactions and in the institutionalisation of a culture which, in other contexts, many of the participants recognised as a bad thing. Once again, in my observation, this seems typical in dysfunctional organisation cultures with bad leaders; in meetings and formal gatherings everyone plays the game, whilst individually they will willingly acknowledge the toxicity of the system.



This culture, with the CEO at the head, in effect presided over the ruin of a previously highly successful company, one which saw its share price decline steadily over the three short years of its life until it was sold off, broken up, and resold.

I believe that if one analyses the transactional situation between the senior team one would again find a series of interlocking rackets in which the rackets displays are around persecution and victimity behaviours. The payoffs in this case are significantly more toxic than in the previous case however.

One of these is illustrated in the following diagram.

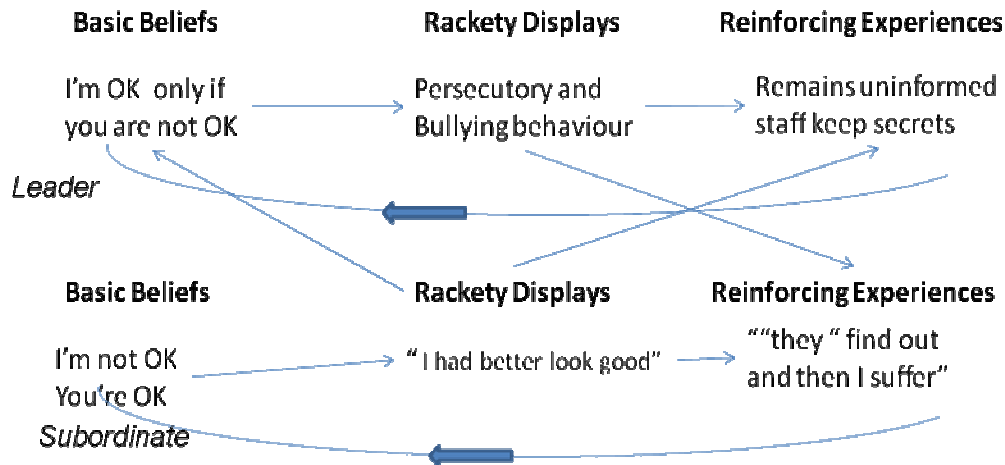


Fig 7: The Unexpected Leader CEO and the Director

The first of these illustrates what I conjecture to have been going on in the Board context. The relationship between the Directors and the CEO seemed to be from AC to CP in many transactions; yet in the Board context it was as if the Critical Parent of the CEO was so strong in relation to the person in the hot seat, that his own CP activated the CP in the other Directors (or at least the majority; those who were not in this ego state did not risk speaking out against the mob behaviour.) This is presumably a second order phenomena where the adaptation to the CEO takes the form of the expression of CP to the victim or scapegoat in the situation. See Below Fig 8.

The Adapted Child therefore manifested strong Controlling Parent in respect to the "officially" designated victim; no one spoke out against this situation. I should be interested in any contributions that explain this behaviour more fully in terms of second or third order analysis; it is of course common in historical contexts and brings to mind situations where terrible things have been done by such dynamics.

**"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing"**

(Edmund Burke)

may perhaps be paraphrased as:

"it only requires one uncontaminated Adult to remain silent for many contaminated adults to act uncontrollably".

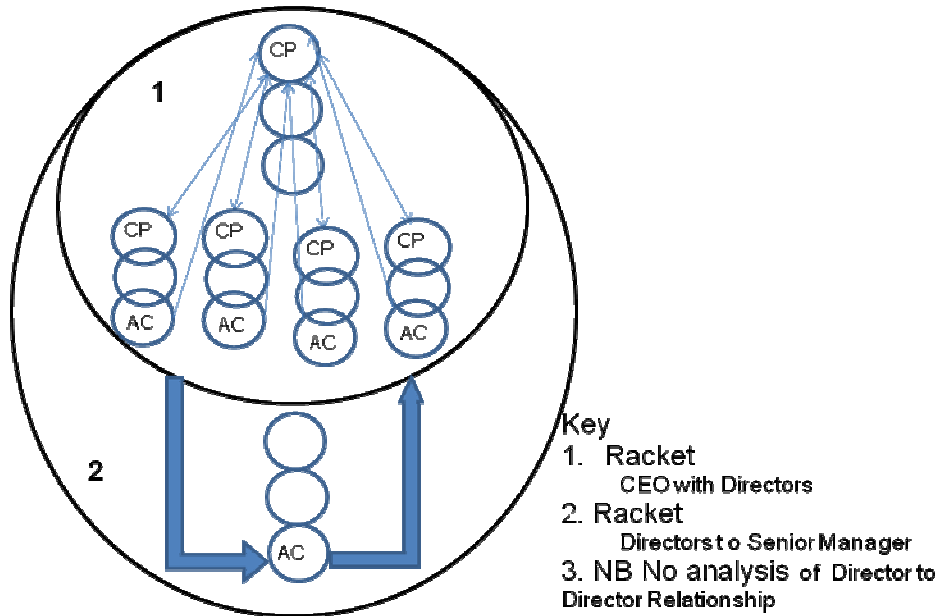


Fig 8. Illustration of Organisational Interlocking Transactional systems  
The Interview  
(Speculative)

The situation between the Director and the project Manager was equally dysfunctional and I have shown it below in Figure 9. In this situation the Director in Adapted Child appears to have activated the Nurturing parent in the Project Manager who otherwise appears to have acted in an adult way with the rest of the team, though in a very passive aggressive way with the CEO, and for that matter to the Director if the other made any attempt to control or manage his behaviour..

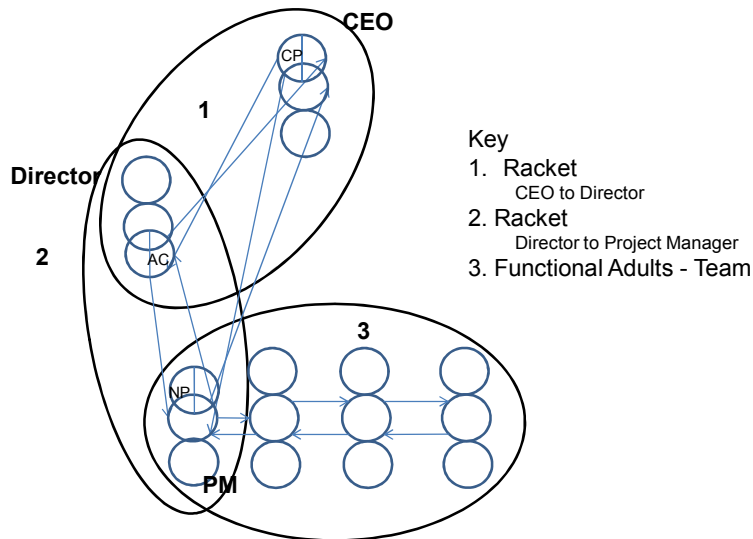


Fig. 9. Illustration of Organisational Interlocking Transactional systems  
The unintended leader  
(Speculative)

In this situation I conjecture that whilst the crossed transactions CEO → Director occur from CP → AC in contamination of the Adult, those from Director → Project Manager occur from AC in the Director → NP in Project Manager, resulting in the



drama triangle behaviours described above. Interestingly the interactions of the Project Manager with his peers seemed to be predominantly Adult Adult.

I am aware in presenting this that it represents at best an approximate analysis and to determine with any degree of confidence the “real” state of affairs would have required many more hours of interaction and observation than I was able to undertake. From the cross cultural perspective however I have seen similar behaviour in companies in France Austria and in North America, with almost identical intimidatory outbursts and similar adaptive responses.

#### **4.4 The Leader (the Sage?) Was born to greatness....**

This vignette characterises perhaps the person who in my overall experience comes closest to what I imagine Lao Tsu had in mind, and certainly what I have in mind as the most attractive and the most effective of leaders.

This man was the Chairman, (in effect CEO) of the principal region of one of the UK’s largest retail Banks. He presided over the largest manufacturing region of the UK and had one of the largest lending portfolios of the Banking sector.

I worked with him and his team over a three year period and our role was to help his staff assess which of their customers should have their facilities extended or maintained and which should have them reduced or withdrawn.

Clearly this was a heavy responsibility and we had to report monthly to the local Board of the Bank.

Invariably these meetings were held in the morning before lunch and the ambience of the meetings was friendly but sober, that is, not gay, using that word in its original sense. The chairman a tall imposing man in his mid fifties was a charming and urbane Englishman, probably Grammar School educated and very calm.

In the meeting at which some seven of his senior team were present he would direct the discussion, always maintaining it on course, never with a raised voice, but not without emotion appropriate to the occasion. He would ensure that all his colleagues were heard or had an opportunity to be heard, and would say little himself other than to set the tone for the direction of the discussion, which generally occurred after I and my team had made our report.

Then after he judged that all had been heard, he would invariably use a formula such as:

“Thank you all for your open contribution which I appreciate” (and one always felt that he genuinely did), ”may I summarise our discussion and draw a conclusion for Dr Best and his team? Then we shall lunch”

He then without notes and very fluently summarised the proceedings, my presentation, the points and arguments for and against and the resulting discussions, and would then synthesise the whole into a conclusion. Occasionally he would omit something in which case one of the team would interject the omission.

After this he would spend ten or fifteen minutes retelling his vision for the whole programme, tying the current meetings' outcomes back into it, and outlining the role of each team member in the future activity.

At the end of the summary he would say "Is my summary adequate?" and in the event of no demur would add "in that case I believe that we have concluded as follows ....."

Although this formula was exactly that – a formula repeated I imagine in many different decision making situations, it was highly effective and all of us felt confident and privileged to have been party to the result, even when the result was prosaic and perhaps not to everyone's satisfaction.

In each of the meetings that I attended over the three years of the project, the progress (which was certainly not always smooth or without errors and setbacks) was dealt with in much the same way, occasionally with some acerbity or irritation on his part but with as much good humour. In one-to-one meetings and in the allocation of tasks he was also extremely clear; everyone knew their role and was able to challenge it if they wanted to, confidently and with the expectation of a valid outcome.

This is not to say that he was weak or fuzzy; when needed he would and did take tough business decisions, but always objectively and with an absence of animus which was reassuring even if one was at the receiving end. You may not have liked the outcome personally, but one always knew why, and that it was not personal. This individual was in my experience the most effective of those I have worked with, and one whose organisation was both happy and profitable.

#### **4.5 Analysis**

This person was in most of the transactions that I observed extremely adult in his transactions. If anything his Free Child was under-present, but then there was an absence of Controlling Parent or Adapted Child. The Nurturing Parent was certainly present in his treatment of his staff and his customers, and I never knew him to withdraw a lending facility without the most careful of analyses and soul searching scrutiny of the Bank's interests and risks to the client.

In normal terms he would have been considered a paternalistic manager, but in times when this term is almost pejorative, his expression of it was almost I would say exemplary in terms of effectiveness and impact.

It is also a very relaxing environment to work in; one has freedom to create and to challenge, confident that such interventions will be treated with the merit they deserve – or not. One also knows that errors will be treated as errors, not as dramas or sins past redemption.

There is little to say except to speculate about how this comes about and how it can be maintained.

In my conclusions I discuss these issues, but I believe that in this particular case there were a number of factors:

1. The fact that his was a banking family and banking and the old fashioned virtues were strongly maintained;
2. The culture of the Bank itself, was to do with integrity, honesty, respect, honour and tradition;

3. The upbringing and education of the man. Born into a banking family, educated at very good schools and almost, one would say, bred for purpose; the development of the Adult Ego was extremely carefully inculcated.

This could undoubtedly have made him a very bad poet or comedy actor; but in terms of his purpose (with which he was very content) his was an ideal training. Is it a good human training? He was happy, respected, healthy, with a great family and so to all visible or discernible evidence yes he was; is it ideal? Who am I to judge!

This does however exemplify a further challenge for the application of therapeutic thinking to organisational areas; the issue of happiness or integration in the subject versus the discussion of outcomes and “usefulness”; in one sense this is the debate about society itself, and can quickly lead us into discussions about utilitarianism on one side, and utopianism on the other, but we must be careful when applying the therapeutic framework to enterprises with economic or socio- economic purposes.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND CONCLUSIONS.**

In this paper I have given an account of a few leadership situations. Each is quite different but each shows the impact of fixed patterns of behaviour, explained in terms of Ego State, Transactions and Racket theory. Of the three cases, two of these leaders are less than fully functional for the organisation in which they worked.

I hope that I have illustrated how these leaders functioned and how the systems of which they were key elements appeared to be fixed throughout time, both in terms of the perpetuation of interlocking racket systems and in the operation these between the various players. In short the situation mirrored in some respects a situation that you would find in many relational settings.

But these are organisational settings, not those which are about intimate personal relationships, so what conclusions can we draw from these few anecdotal examples that might point the way for further enquiry in leadership thinking and organisational development?

First, I believe that each individual in these cases, whether leader or follower is behaving as they do in order to get their relational needs met as best they can. This belief stems from my convictions rather than any evidence to this effect, and the behaviour is clearly in most if not all cases out of awareness, EXCEPT that in the case of both the dysfunctional examples, there has been significant success through these behaviours, and certainly in the Chairman's case, up to the end of my relationship with him at which point he was nearing 70 years old, the benefits far outweighed the disadvantages. In the case of the unintentional leader his behaviour cost him his job eventually but not his fortune.

Perhaps the second conclusion is therefore that there is not necessarily any link between integrated behaviour as a leader and reward or longevity in the role. Indeed it often appears that bad behaviour is rewarded in corporate life, and therefore in the absence of a culture that demands good behaviour, bad behaviour may be tolerated or even tacitly encouraged or accepted. This lends a much greater role to culture in the development of leadership behaviour and in the expression of followership behaviours also.

Hence, thirdly, I conclude that the underpinning of the system of leadership and followership is deeply to do with culture and that the maintenance of a particular culture through time is profoundly interconnected with leadership behaviour. There is no space here to examine the interconnection of culture with script, games etc. but clearly the systems of behaviour, values, aspiration and beliefs that are ingredients of culture perpetuate themselves through time and, unless as in the Unintended leader example, the organisation fails totally as a result of them (rather like the host killed by the parasite), they can extend over generations of members of the organisation even when there is no pre existing social or biological connection between these generations of leaders and followers.

But, we may speculate that the legitimate social position held by the leader (positional power, or referent power) enables the emergence of rackets or other script based behaviours from a background of previously predominantly functional behaviour

(“just doing the job”). This may happen because the constraints around behaviour typical of a functionally based structure are relaxed in the role of leader; the leader after all is legitimately free of many of the constraints that affect his subordinates.

Once these behaviours become established in the organisation, I conclude that the culture gradually shifts to the new dynamic until recruitment and other supporting processes are actively supporting the development of a culture in which the “new” but dysfunctional behaviour is the norm.

If I am correct in believing that some leadership behaviour traps followers into a system of interlocking rackets or other script bound behaviour, then it is likely that the recruitment processes of these organisations (or political parties, religions etc) perpetuate these systems. Frequently, today’s leaders and organisations use psychological profiling to identify the range of compatible profiles for those who will “succeed” in the business – such success includes what is frequently referred to as cultural compatibility. The process of emerging as a leader in these organisations is illustrated below.

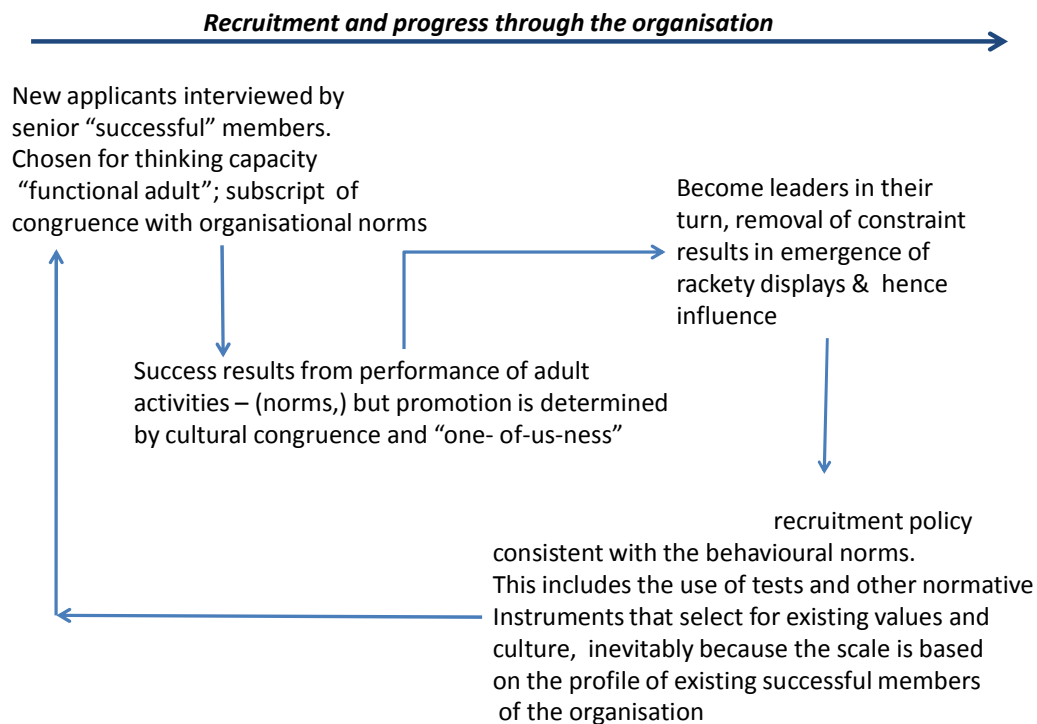
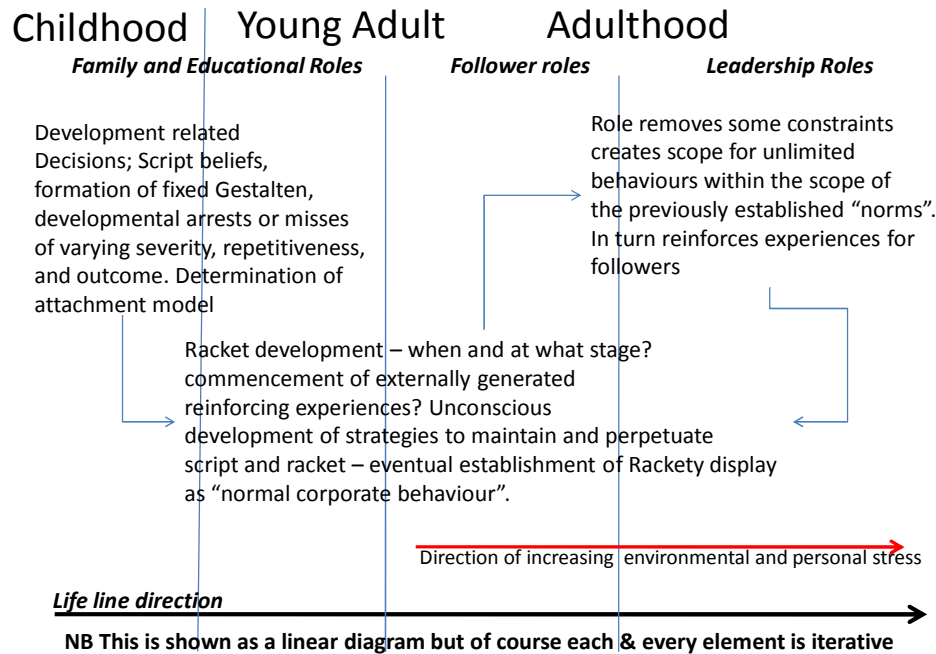


Fig. 10: the process of emerging leadership

I regard this as analogous in some ways to the process of growth from childhood to adulthood and the assumption of progressively more “grown up” social roles as depicted below.

If this hypothesis is correct then my last conclusion is that the perpetuation of dysfunctional behaviours in leaders and the support for this behaviour to continue which is such a puzzling feature of so many modern organisations even with the merge of concepts such as empowerment, equality, freedom to speak, and so on is in effect works something like:



**Fig. 11 Relationship of Development to Assumption of Adult roles**

- The definition of the basic system – field, figure and characteristics of the environment and the system itself from the energetic and behavioural perspectives set up by the founder or Euhemerus.
- Relational needs of leader and followers – ideally met through authentic and healthy interaction around a set of functional activities designed to achieve a shared goal underpinned by equally shared values and common beliefs;
- Complex series of transactions between leader-follower pairs may lead to discontinuity or sudden change through death disruption or takeover.

At this point there is a possibility for the process to become dysfunctional; clearly if the leader-follower relationships follow the original pattern the organisation continues healthily, but if by deliberate efforts (psychological profiling, skewed selection of new joiners, sudden elevation of an immature individual etc) result in the emphasis on the dysfunctional rather than the functional we may see the emergence of:

- Rackets operating at individual and group level Institutionalisation of “bad behaviour” together with the decline of value based culture and or descent into corrupt or otherwise inappropriate behaviours.
- Maintenance of the culture through recruitment and development policies and through reward structures (which may act to the good or the bad).

Finally, we know and are beginning to develop our understanding of the way in which the culture of an organisation remain invariant even through quite dramatic changes of



structure or personnel; If as Luhmann proposes it is possible to extend the concepts of Autopoiesis into social systems, then these aspects of organisations and self regulating complex systems are extremely long lived, but we do not as yet fully understand how they operate or how we can intervene constructively to change them without, as it were, killing the patient. Luhmann's extension of the concepts of Autopoiesis into social systems and Pask's early (1970s) in Conversation Theory have a lot to offer in this debate, but time does not allow me to explore these ideas here, but my final thought is that the operation of Rackets may act as elements of the maintenance of unhealthy functioning and in effect may act as part of the autopoietic functioning in these cases.

In conclusion I hope that I have stimulated you to think that the use of TA in organisations in combination with other approaches may help us to reduce the pathology of leadership and increase the good use of prodigious powers.

THE END

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